

House Passes Moran Bill to Recruit Kansas Doctors

House of Representatives Passes J-1 Visa Extension for Underserved Communities

Washington, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today announced that the House has passed Moran-introduced legislation to bring more doctors to rural America. The legislation, HR 4453, reauthorizes the J-1 Visa waiver program, which gives international medical graduates the opportunity to stay in the United States if they agree to practice in a medically underserved area at least three years. The J-1 Visa wavier program, which expired May 31, 2004, will now be reauthorized, retroactively, for an additional two years.

"This legislation provides an additional opportunity for rural clinics and hospitals to recruit and retain experienced physicians for their communities," Moran said. "In many of the small towns across America, this is the only way to bring doctors into communities. The extension of the J-1 Visa program will literally save lives in rural Kansas."

Nationally, 49 states now participate in the J-1 Visa program, accounting for over 1,027 doctors in 2003. Each state is allowed up to 30 J-1 Visa doctors per year. According to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, to date, they have recommended 26 waivers, including 11 for primary care physicians and 15 for medical specialists.

This program has been a priority for Moran. Since 1993, the program has brought over 120 physicians to Kansas. Fifty-eight percent of those doctors remained in Kansas after their required years of service.

"Congressman Moran has played a vital role in helping to expedite the process to ensure that Jewell County would not be without physician coverage," said Jewell County Hospital Administrator Deanna Freeman. "Dr. Danilo Calderon and Dr. Rina Mina have purchased a home in the community, recently became new parents to a daughter, and look forward to planting their roots in the community."

The legislation now goes to the Senate for consideration.

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